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FM AMEMBASSY LA PAZ
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0589
INFO RUEHAC/AMEMBASSY ASUNCION 6098
RUEHBO/AMEMBASSY BOGOTA 3415
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA 7275
RUEHBU/AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES 4530
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS 1795
RUEHPE/AMEMBASSY LIMA 1833
RUEHMN/AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO 4009
RUEHQ/AMEMBASSY QUITO 4430
RUEHSG/AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO 8999
RHMF/HQ USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL
RUMIAAA/USCINCSO MIAMI FL
RUEHLMC/MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE CORP
RHEBAAA/DEPT OF ENERGY WASHINGTON DC
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHINGTON DC
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C O N F I D E N T I A L LA PAZ 002506

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/15/2016
TAGS: ECON PGOV PREL BL CU VE
SUBJECT: VENEZUELAN AND CUBAN INFLUENCE GROWING

Classified By: DCM Krishna Urs for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Two social sector leaders, Rufo Calle and Hugo Vega (protect), independently told poloff September 14 that Venezuela and Cuba are increasingly involved in Bolivian social organizations. Rufo Calle, president of a national indigenous/labor organization (CSUTCB), said the MAS is intensifying attempts to buy social sector support with Venezuelan assistance. He reported that the MAS paid transportation and per diem for 500 persons to go to Sucre to "oversee" the Constituent Assembly and that it has taken control of several indigenous organizations using similar means. Calle said the MAS knew it could not infiltrate the CSUTCB, so it caused a faction, also called the CSUTCB, to splinter off. He claimed the MAS has provided the new faction with an office, equipment and supplies, he thought funded by government coffers and/or Venezuela. Calle also reported the Venezuelan Embassy called him recently to confirm Venezuela's donation of several vehicles to the CSUTCB. When the Venezuelan caller realized he had contacted Calle by mistake (instead of the MAS faction), he abruptly ended the call.

¶2. (C) Hugo Vega, the president of a highlands (Altiplano) neighborhood association, also reported increasing Cuban and Venezuelan influence in the La Paz department. He said young MAS leaders are active around Lake Titicaca, and that over 1,000 traveled to Cuba for training. Of that group, 700 were invited for a return visit. Vega said that since January, the MAS has been heavily investing government funds in social sector groups. Additionally, he reported that Cuban personnel claiming to be doctors are working the Altiplano in groups of three-- a physician, a sociologist and a political scientist, he said-- to indoctrinate rural Bolivians. Vega said the MAS' previous syndicalist style has taken on a more Cuban flavor, with MAS rural leaders using intimidation tactics and eavesdropping on campesinos in order to assess their loyalty.

¶3. (C) Comment: Both leaders separately said despite the MAS' dictatorial style, many rural Bolivians living in the Altiplano support Morales. The comments of both leaders, however, indicate growing resentment of MAS interference and the financial support (governmental, Venezuelan or Cuban)

flowing to some grassroots organizations. End comment.
GREENLEE